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NASHVILLE -- The Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development today announced that the U.S. Department of Labor has approved a petition for the North American Free Trade Implementation Act (NAFTA) for Ameristeel Corporation, Dust Processing Division. This petition covers all workers of the company in Jackson who produced zinc oxide.

NAFTA Trade Adjustment Assistance is a program administered in Tennessee for the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) by the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The program offers assistance to workers whose jobs have been adversely affected by a shift in production to Mexico or Canada, or from imports from Mexico or Canada. The certification by the USDOL applies to layoffs which began on April 23, 2002, and will remain in effect until June 07, 2004, when the petition expires.

Under the provisions of the law, NAFTA-TAA allows for retraining while workers are still receiving regular unemployment insurance benefits. Two separate 26-week periods of trade benefits may be obtained for workers while enrolled in approved training after regular unemployment insurance benefits have been exhausted.

The programs also provide allowances for attempting to secure new employment in other areas and relocating to the new place of employment. Specific instructions will be provided to affected workers through their local Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development office.

Claims for assistance will be taken on Friday, July 12, 2002 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at the West Tennessee Career Center at 416 E. Lafayette Street in Jackson. The Department of Labor & Workforce Development has sent notices to former employees informing them when they are scheduled to report.

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities

El Departamento del Trabajo y Desarrollo de la Fuerza Laboral es un organismo empresarial que aplica la igualdad de oportunidades. Los servicios y ayudas auxiliares están disponibles para los individuos con impedimentos si los solicitan.